



JANUARY 10c
No. 36

I.C.B.

BLACKHAWK

52 BIG FULL WIDTH PAGES

Hawk-aaaa! RINGS
ACROSS THE SKY AS THE
Blackhawks FLY FORTH
TO BATTLE THE FORCES OF
THE BEAUTIFUL POWER-MAD
Tarya!

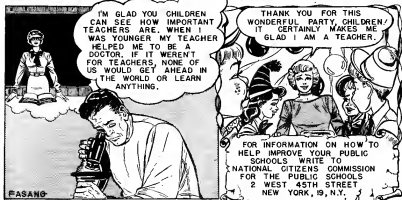
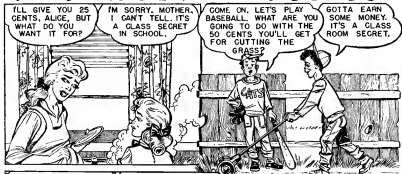
4
Complete
BLACKHAWK
stories
plus a
laugh-filled
CHOP CHOP
comedy!





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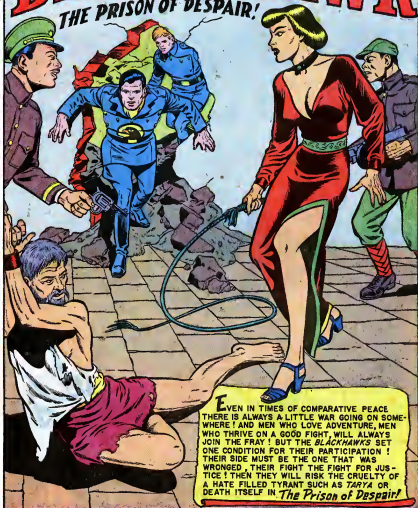
the classroom secret



BLACKHAWK

BLACKHAWK

THE PRISON OF DESPAIR!



EVEN IN TIMES OF COMPARATIVE PEACE THERE IS ALWAYS A LITTLE WAR GOING ON SOMEWHERE! AND MEN WHO LOVE ADVENTURE, MEN WHO THRIVE ON A GOOD FIGHT, WILL ALWAYS JOIN THE FRAY! BUT THE BLACKHAWKS SET ONE CONDITION FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION! THEIR SIDE MUST BE THE ONE THAT WAS WRONGED, THEIR FIGHT THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE! THEN THEY WILL RISK THE CRUELTY OF A HATE FILLED TYRANT SUCH AS TARYA OR DEATH ITSELF IN *The Prison of Despair!*

NOT FAR FROM THE BLACKHAWKS' ISLAND BASE ...



THOSE WERE WONDERFUL DAYS OF PEACE! ALAS, IT HAS BEEN MY MISFORTUNE TO KNOW NOTHING BUT WAR SINCE I ASCENDED THE THRONE! PERHAPS IT IS MY YOUTH THAT KEEPS ME FROM THE WISDOM ONE NEEDS TO AVOID WAR!

I THINK NOT! THE ENEMY ON YOUR BORDER IS A VASSAL OF THE MOST WARLIKE NATION ON EARTH, AND THEY WOULD FIGHT TO ENGULF YOUR COUNTRY REGARDLESS OF WHO IS KING!



WE OF KHARTOOR HAVE WANTED ONLY PEACE BUT SINCE GANDOR HAS, JINNESTAN'S HONORABLE LEADER, HAS MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED AND THE EVIL TARYA HAS TAKEN OVER, THERE HAS BEEN DEATH AND DESTRUCTION!

I HAVE HEARD OF THE TERRIBLE BOMBINGS BY JINNESTAN'S PLANES!



THE BOMBINGS ARE A HORROR! MY PEOPLE SUFFER DAILY! THE JUNGLE BETWEEN JINNESTAN AND KHARTOOR IS IMPENETRABLE BY A LAND ARMY BUT IF THE AIR WAR DOES NOT STOP WE WILL HAVE TO YIELD TO THE ENEMY!



WE HAVE NO PLANES AND OUR ANTI-AIRCRAFT IS WEAK! YOU BLACKHAWKS ARE OUR ONLY HOPE!

WE WILL SMASH JINNESTAN'S BOMBERS ON THEIR HOME GROUND, YOUR MAJESTY! YOUR FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT AND WE'RE GOING TO LET TARYA KNOW IT SO SHE CAN RELAY IT TO THE VIOLENT POWER THAT SEEKS TO CONTROL THE WORLD!



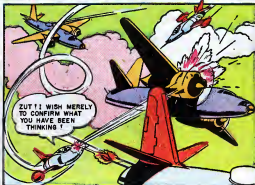
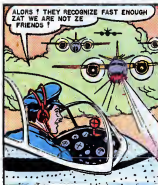
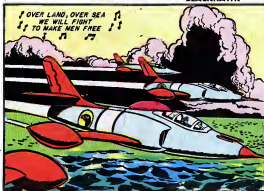
EARLY THAT EVENING ON BLACKHAWK ISLAND ...

HERE COME JINNESTAN'S BOMBERS! THEY'LL REACH KHARTOOR JUST AFTER DARK!

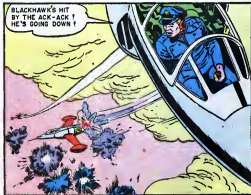
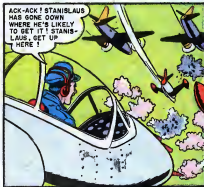
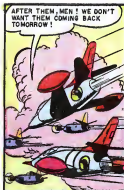
NOT THIS TIME! WE'RE GOING TO SHOW THEM IT ISN'T JUST A LARK! LET'S GO, MEN!



BLACKHAWK



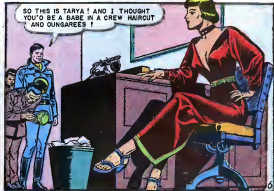
BLACKHAWK



BLACKHAWK



BLACKHAWK





YOU MAY RISE NOW, POOR BOY! I HOPE MY SOLDIERS DID NOT HURT YOU WITH THEIR RIFLE BUTTS! IT MUST BE DIFFICULT INDEED FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND OUR WAYS! I WILL EXPLAIN... BUT FIRST...



OUT OF HERE, ALL OF YOU! I WANT TO BE ALONE WITH BLACKHAWK!



YOU AND I ARE A MAN AND WOMAN OF THE WORLD, BLACKHAWK! SURELY YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT WITH THE PEOPLE OF JINNESTAN, STEEPED IN A CULTURE OF SLAVERY AND SUBSERVENCE, IT IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE SOME OF THE ANCIENT CUSTOMS SUCH AS KNEELING BEFORE THEIR RULER!

I UNDERSTAND ONLY THAT THEY LIVE UNDER A WORSE TYRANNY NOW THAN EVER IN THEIR HISTORY!



WORDS! WORDS! WHAT DO THEY MATTER? IT IS ONLY POWER THAT COUNTS... THE POWER THAT THE STRONG LIKE YOU AND I CAN HAVE!

IF THIS IS A PITCH TO GET ME AND MY MEN ON THE SIDE OF TREACHERY, TERROR, AND DESTRUCTION FORGET IT! WE'RE INTERESTED IN RIGHT, NOT MIGHT!



BUT THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN THAT, BLACKHAWK! THERE IS A PRIZE... ME! AM I NOT BEAUTIFUL? DO I NOT MAKE YOU FORGET YOUR SILLY PRINCIPLES?

YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, ALL RIGHT, TARYA, BUT ONLY THE WAY A CORAL SNAKE IS BEAUTIFUL!

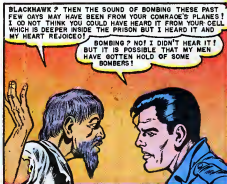


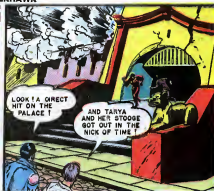
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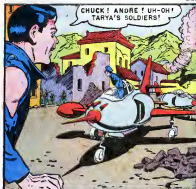




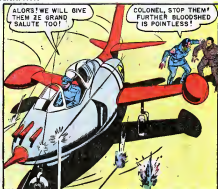
BLACKHAWK







CHUCK! ANDRE! UH-OH!
TARYA'S SOLDIERS!



ALORS! WE WILL GIVE
THEM ZE GRAND
SALUTE TOO!

COLONEL, STOP THEM!
FURTHER BLOODSHED
IS POINTLESS!



CEASE FIRE!
OUR LEADER IS
CAPTURED...
OUR CAUSE
LOST!

AND A GOOD
THING
TOO!



JINNESTAN OWES YOU BLACKHAWKS
EVERYTHING! I KNOW WHERE TO
FIND THE MEN WHO HAVE BEEN
LOYAL TO ME! I WILL SET UP MY
OLD GOVERNMENT AND YOU MAY
TELL THE KING OF KHARTOOR
THAT THE WAR IS AT AN END!

HE WILL BE VERY HAPPY!
GOOD LUCK, GANDOR
RAS!



GANDOR RAS... OUR LEADER...
HE IS FREE! IT WAS WORTH
ENDURING THE BOMBING FOR
THIS!

MY FOLLOWERS! HOW
GOOD IT IS TO SEE YOU!
BUT FIRST YOU MUST
TAKE THOSE EVIL ONES
AS WELL AS TARYA, INTO
CUSTODY!



EVERYTHING LOOKS
ALL RIGHT DOWN
THERE NOW! BUT
SAY, WHERE DID
YOU FELLOWS
GET HOLD OF
THE BOMBERS?

HA! HA! A LITTLE RUDE AND WE GOT
TWO OF TARYA'S! WE RADIOED HER
THAT WE WOULD EXCHANGE THE
LOCATION OF OUR BASE, WHICH WE
KNEW SHE MUST WANT, FOR YOUR
FREEDOM! SHE AGREED AND WE
TOLD HER WHERE WE WERE!



SHE SENT HER BOMBERS TO BLACKHAWK ISLAND
IMMEDIATELY! BUT WE WERE LAYING FOR THEM!
WE SHOT DOWN ALL BUT TWO AND FORCED THOSE
SAFELY TO EARTH! WE HAD ENOUGH BOMBS ON THE
ISLAND FOR OUR RAIDS! OLAF, STAN, CHOP CHOP
AND HENDRICKSON DID A GOOD JOB ON THE
BOMBERS WHILE ANDRE AND I WERE FIGHTER
ESCORTS!

NICE WORK, CHUCK! MY SHOULDER
FEELS BETTER JUST HEARING THAT!
AND AS SOON AS WE CAN GET THE
BULLET OUT, WE'LL REPORT TO THE
KING OF A PEACEFUL KHARTOOR!



ZOOMING OUT OF THE CLOUDS LIKE PREDATORY EAGLES CAME THE AIR RAIDERS, MODERN BANDITS OF THE SKY, STRIKING SWIFT AND HARD AT HELPLESS CARGO PLANES! NOR WAS THERE ANY DEFENSE AGAINST THESE RUTHLESS BEASTS OF PREY... UNTIL THE FEARLESS BLACK-HAWKS TOOK TO THE AIR WITH A SONG ON THEIR LIPS AND A CHALLENGE IN THEIR STOUT HEARTS!

EN ROUTE FROM SOUTH AFRICA WITH A PRECIOUS CARGO OF UNCUT DIAMONDS AND RAW GOLD COMES A PLANE OF THE TRANS-FREIGHT LINES...

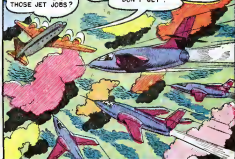
HO-HUM! SEVEN MORE HOURS BEFORE I CAN GET INTO THAT SOFT LITTLE BED OF MINE IN MARKNESS CORNERS!

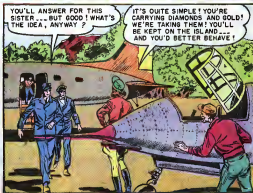
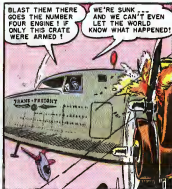
Y'GOT SOMETHING THERE, JIM! EVEN THOUGH IT ONLY TAKES FOUR DAYS FOR THIS RUN AND TURNABOUT I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO GETTING BACK TO THE U.S.A. AS IF I'D BEEN AWAY A YEAR!

SUDDENLY...

HEY, LOOK! WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THOSE JET JOBS?

SEARCH ME! THEY'RE THE VERY LATEST... BUT WHY THEY'RE WINGING STRAIGHT TOWARD OUR TAIL IS SOMETHING I DON'T GET!







NOT IF WE HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT! LET'S SHOW 'EM, FELLERS!

IMBECILES! THE RISKS YOU'LL RUN IN THE SERVICE OF THAT SWINE WHO OWNS TRANS-FREIGHT!



TAKE THEM TO ONE OF THE SHACKS! REMOVE THE CARGO FROM THE SHIP! HA/HA! I'D LIKE TO SEE W.C. LARKIN'S FACE WHEN HE HEARS ABOUT THIS ONE!

HE'LL BE ONE REAL SAD MILLIONAIRE, KATE, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU THINK THAT HE NOT ONLY OWNS THE FREIGHT LINE BUT THAT THIS PARTICULAR CARGO HAPPENS TO BE HIS, TOO!

SEVERAL DAYS LATER IN THE OFFICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY ----

BLACKHAWKS, WE'VE TRIED THE COAST GUARD AND THE F.B.I. THEY ADMIT FAILURE! YOU, THEY TELL US, ARE OUR ONE HOPE! YOU CAN NAME YOUR OWN PRICE IF YOU'LL STOP THIS AIR PIRACY!

WE WON'T RISK OUR LIVES FOR MONEY, MR. HARLAN, BUT WE WILL FOR SOMETHING WE BELIEVE IN... AND WE BELIEVE THAT THESE HIL-JACKERS OF THE CLOUDS MUST BE RUN DOWN!



WELL, HARLAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THIS LATEST DISASTER? I'M LOSING MILLIONS, I TELL YOU... MILLIONS!

ON THE CONTRARY, MR. LARKIN, IT IS WE WHO ARE INSURING YOUR CARGOES WHO ARE BEARING THESE LOSSES!

RUBBISH! I'D HAVE SOLD THAT SHIPMENT OF UNCUT DIAMONDS AND GOLD FOR TWICE THE AMOUNT OF THE INSURANCE! BESIDES WHAT ABOUT THE POOR CHAPS WHO FLEW THE PLANE?

THEY HAVE MY SYMPATHY, MR. LARKIN! WE'RE DOING OUR BEST! THESE ARE THE BLACK-HAWKS! THEY'RE GOING AFTER THE AIR RAIDERS!

H'MMM! I SEE! AND JUST HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO GO ABOUT IT, MAY I ASK?

YOU MAY ASK, MR. LARKIN, BUT IT'S OUR POLICY TO KEEP OUR METHODS TO OURSELVES!

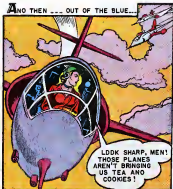


BLACKHAWK



BLACKHAWK

AND THEN ... OUT OF THE BLUE...



LOOK SHARP, MEN!
THOSE PLANES
AREN'T BRINGING
US TEA AND
COOKIES!

YOU'RE NOT KIDDING,
KATE! THOSE ARE
THE BLACKHAWKS!
AND I DON'T WANT
ANY PART OF THEM!



ANY ONE OF YOU WHO RUNS OUT
WOULDN'T LIVE TO TELL ABOUT IT! WE
CAN FEED THE BLACKHAWKS TO THE
FISHES IN FIVE MINUTES FLAT AND
THAT GOES FOR ANY OTHER DIRTY
PAID STODGES OF MR. W.C. LARKIN!

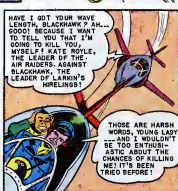


A GIRL... AND VERY PRETTY, NON?

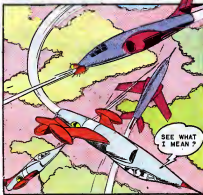


YEAH! AND SHE
SURE CAN FLY,
ANDRE!

HAVE I GOT YOUR WAVE
LENGTH, BLACKHAWK? AH...
GOOD! BECAUSE I WANT
TO TELL YOU THAT I'M
GOING TO KILL YOU,
MYSELF! KATE ROYLE,
THE LEADER OF THE
AIR RAIDERS. AGAINST
BLACKHAWK, THE
LEADER OF LARKIN'S
HIRELINGS!

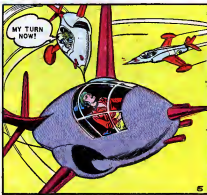


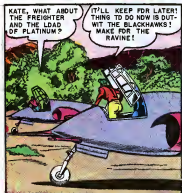
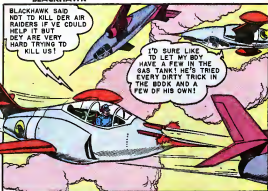
THOSE ARE HARSH
WORDS, YOUNG LADY
...AND I WOULDN'T
BE TOO ENTHUSIA-
STIC ABOUT THE
CHANCES OF KILLING
ME! IT'S BEEN
TRIED BEFORE!



SEE WHAT
I MEAN?

MY TURN
NOW!





BLACKHAWK





VOILA! YOU ARE NOT MUCH FASTER ON ZE GROUND ZAN YOU ARE IN ZE AIR, NON AMI!



EXCUSE ME, CHUM, I WANT A LITTLE TIME TO TALK TO YOUR BOSS!



YOU'RE VERY HANDY WITH YOUR FISTS, BLACKHAWK! UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T OFFER YOU THAT KIND OF COMPETITION!

THERE'S REALLY NO REASON WHY YOU SHOULD OFFER ANY KIND, KATE ROYLE! YOU MUST HAVE BEEN MAO TO THINK YOU COULD GET AWAY WITH THESE SKY RAID IN-DEFINITELY! AND YOU MAY AS WELL FACE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE THROUGH!



AND COME BACK WITH YOU TO PAY FOR MY CRIMES, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE IMPLYING, BLACKHAWK? HA! HA! WELL, I DON'T CONSIDER MYSELF A CRIMINAL! I CONSIDER MYSELF A BENEFACTOR OF MANKIND!

SORRY, BUT I CAN'T QUITE FIGURE OUT HOW YOU COME TO THAT CONCLUSION!



OF COURSE YOU CAN'T, BLACKHAWK, BECAUSE YOU LOOK UPON W.C. LARKIN AS A DECENT HUMAN BEING ENGAGED IN THE AIR FREIGHT BUSINESS! BUT I KNOW HIM TO BE A GREEDY SPECIES OF VERMIN WHO THOUGHT NOTHING OF SENDING THE MAN I LOVED TO HIS DEATH FOR THE SAKE OF HIS DIRTY PROFITS!

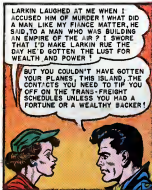
I'M SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT THAT... BUT DOES IT JUSTIFY YOUR BEHAVIOR?



TO ME IT DOES! IT ALL BEGAN SEVERAL YEARS AGO! MY FIANCÉE WAS FLYING FOR LARKIN BEFORE HE HAD AMASSED THE KIND OF FORTUNE HE HAS NOW! AT THAT TIME HE WANTED HIS PILOTS TO FLY ANY DILAPIDATED CRATE... NOTHING MATTERED BUT GETTING THE CARGO THROUGH!



I BEGGED MY FIANCÉE TO GIVE UP THE JOB... BUT HE WANTED TO MAKE AS MUCH MONEY AS HE COULD, SO WE COULD GET MARRIED! MARRIED! HA... HA... WHA! A BITTER JOKE! HE ESCAPED FROM THE FIRST CRASH... BUT THE SECOND TOOK HIS LIFE!



BLACKHAWK



I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE OF THAT, BLACKHAWK!

MR. X!



YES...MR. X, MY DEAR KATE! AND I MUST SAY I CAME IN THE NICK OF TIME! SOMETHING TOLD ME YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE BLACKHAWKS!



I FLEW IN A LITTLE TOO LATE TO HELP YOU IN THE AIR EVEN THOUGH MY MEN AND I HAD VERY FAST AND NEW FIGHTER PLANES! BUT I RATHER THOUGHT I'D FIND YOU ALL DOWN HERE!

BLACKHAWK TURNED THE TABLES ON ME!



PERHAPS HE ISN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TURN THE TABLES! CUT THESE CURSED BLACKHAWKS DOWN, BOYS!

NO... DON'T!



KATE ROYLE ISN'T GETTING SENTIMENTAL, IS SHE?

I DON'T KNOW! I THOUGHT I'D KILL BLACKHAWK BUT I DON'T THINK NOW THAT I'D HAVE GONE THROUGH WITH IT! CAN'T WE JUST HOLD THEM ON THE ISLAND THE WAY WE'VE DONE WITH THE FREIGHT PLANE CREWS?



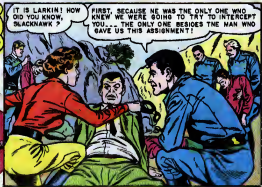
AN IDIOTIC IDEA, KATE! THE BLACKHAWKS AREN'T LIKE ORDINARY MEN! YOU COULD NEVER HOLD THEM! SHOOT, BOYS!

HOLD IT! SPEAKING OF THE FREIGHT LINE CREWS, I THINK THE ONE FROM TODAY'S PLANE MUST HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH YOUR OTHER CAPTIVES... AND HERE THEY COME, ARMED TO THE TEETH!



THEY'RE COMING ALL RIGHT... BUT THEY'RE NOT ARMED!

BLACKHAWK



SECOND, BECAUSE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR DESCRIPTION OF LARKIN MADE ME THINK HE WAS THE KIND OF MAN WHO WOULD ROB HIS OWN PLUMES TO SWINDLE AN INSURANCE COMPANY WHILE HE KEPT THE LOOT! AND THIRD, BECAUSE LARKIN DID A GOOD JOB OF DISGUISSING HIS VOICE BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME!

YOU VICIOUS, CONNIVING EXCUSE FOR A HUMAN BEING! I'LL... ENOUGH OF THAT, KATE! REMEMBER THERE'S QUITE A BIT OF TROUBLE YOU'VE GOTTEN INTO ALREADY THROUGH YOUR YEN FOR REVENGE! MAYBE I CAN GET YOUR PUNISHMENT LIGHTENED IF YOU'LL JUST RELAX!

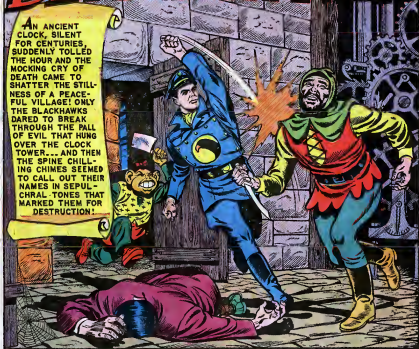
JEEPERS, I'LL BE GLAD WHEN THE COAST GUARD GETS HERE TO TAKE OVER THIS CROWD! THE WAY THAT GAL'S LOOKING AT BLACKHAWK, SHE MAY GET HIM TO SLOPE WITH HER... AND ONLY AN HOUR AGO SHE OESPISED HIM!

ZUT! EVEN I WOULD NOT HAVE ZE STRENGTH TO RESIST HER IN BLACKHAWK'S PLACE... BUT ALAS, IT EES MY SAG DUTY TO RADIO ZE COAST GUARD AS SOON AS WE GET BACK TO ZE PLANES!



BLACKHAWK

AN ANCIENT CLOCK, SILENT FOR CENTURIES, SUDDENLY TOLLED THE HOUR AND THE MOCKING CRY OF DEATH CAME TO SHATTER THE STILLNESS OF A PEACEFUL VILLAGE! ONLY THE BLACKHAWKS DARED TO BREAK THROUGH THE PALL OF EVIL THAT HUNG OVER THE CLOCK TOWER... AND THEN THE SPINE CHILLING CHIMES SEEMED TO CALL OUT THEIR NAMES IN SEPULCHRAL TONES THAT MARKED THEM FOR DESTRUCTION!



THERE'S NOVOTA! THE MAYOR WILL TAKE US DIRECTLY TO THE TOWER! HE'S AFRAID SOMETHING ELSE MIGHT HAPPEN IF THERE'S ANY DELAY IN CLEARING UP THE MYSTERY!

MAYOR OF NOVOTA VELL YUCKY TO HAVE BLACKHAWKS FOR FRIENDS! WE SOON FIND OUT WHO KILL TOWER WATCHMAN AND TOWN CONSTABLE!



BLACKHAWKS, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE BREATHED EASILY IN DAYS! COME! WE GO TO THE TOWER!

LEAD THE WAY, MR. MAYOR!



BLACKHAWK

TWO NIGHTS IN A ROW IT HAPPENED! EACH NIGHT WE WERE ALL TERRIFIED WHEN THE OLD CLOCK STRUCK AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF SILENCE! THE FIRST NIGHT THE WATCHMAN INVESTIGATED AND DIED, THE SECOND IT WAS THE CONSTABLE!

ZUT! IT WOULD SEEM SOME EVIL ONE DID NOT WISH THE OLD CLOCK INVESTIGATED!

BUT WE SAW NO ONE BUT THE DEAD MAN WHEN WE GOT TO THE TOWER...AND NO TRACE OF A MURDERER! IT WAS ALMOST AS IF A GHOST HAD DONE THE DEED EXCEPT...

EXCEPT DOT GHOSTS DON'T MAKE DER KNIFE WOUND, JA?

I HAVE TOLD NO ONE THAT I HAVE CALLED YOU, BLACKHAWK, BUT THE WHOLE TOWN WILL BE GRATEFUL IF YOU GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS HORROR!

WE'LL GO UP TO THE TOWER NOW!

BONG! BONG! BONG!

LISTEN! THE CLOCK IS STRIKING AGAIN!

IT COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A BETTER TIME!

LET'S GO MEN!

WHEN! WE'LL BE LUCKY TO HAVE ANY WIND LEFT WHEN WE GET TO THE TOP OF THIS STAIRWAY!

AY BAN EXPECT TO HAVE ENOUGH TO TAKE GOOD SOCK AT KILLER!

THAT MUST BE THE DOOR TO THE INSIDE OF THE BIG CLOCK!

BLACKHAWK



IT LOOKS LIKE MANY OTHER
BIG CLOCKS OF THIS KIND
I HAVE SEEN !



GET OUT A FLASHLIGHT, SOMEBODY !
LET'S TAKE A BETTER LOOK AT
THESE WORKS AND SEE IF WE
CAN FIND WHAT SET THE CHIMES
GOING !



BLACKHAWK !
LOOK OUT !



NOT
SO FAST,
YOU !



HE MOVED SO FAST I
COULDN'T CONNECT
VERY HARD !

WE
CONNECT
VELLY MUCH
BETTER
NEXT TIME !



ACH ! HE HAS DISAPPEARED !
HOW COULD HE GET
OUT SO FAST ?
WE WERE RIGHT
BEHIND HIM !

PY
YIMINY !
HE IS LIKE
GHOST...FAST,
ELUSIVE AND
DISAPPEARS !

BLACKHAWK



BLACKHAWK



COUNT RENZLA AND HIS BEAUTIFUL WARD, MARIA BORDO! THEY ARE OLD ARISTOCRATS FROM THE PROVINCES WHO HAVE HONORED MY HOUSEHOLD THIS PAST WEEK!



MY DEAR COUNT, LADY MARIA, MAY I PRESENT THE BLACKHAWKS?

A PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, GENTLEMEN!



YOU WILL BE HERE LONG, BLACKHAWK?

NOT VERY LONG, SIR! AT LEAST I DON'T THINK SO!



ODD HOW I NEVER THOUGHT OF SETTLING IN ZEES WONDERFUL COUNTRY UNTIL NOW!

THAT IS A CHARMING THOUGHT, M'ZIEU, BUT I AM SURE YOU WOULD FIND IT BORING COMPARED TO THE LIFE TO WHICH YOU ARE ACCUSTOMED!

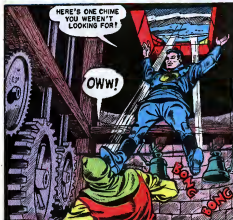


COME, MY FRIENDS, LET US HAVE A LATE SUPPER AND FORGET THAT THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD! WHO COULD EVEN DREAM OF EVIL IN THE WARM GLOW OF YOUR KINNESS, MY DEAR MAYOR?



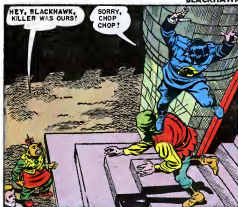
PRETEND THAT YOU ARE DRINKING A LOT OF THAT WINE, ACT AS IF YOU'RE FEELING IT! BLACKHAWK, WHAT'S THE POINT?





BLACKHAWK





HEY, BLACKHAWK, KILLER WAS OURS!

SORRY, CHOP CHOP!



THE BOYS CAN HOLD YOU, COUNT--



...WHILE I RIP THIS FAKE BEARD OFF!

THE COUNT! HOW DID YOU KNOW, BLACKHAWK?



I KNEW WHEN I SAW THE SLIGHT MARK I HAD LEFT ON HIS FACE THE FIRST TIME WE MET IN THE TOWER! I NOTICED IT AS SOON AS I SAW HIM AT THE MAYOR'S HOUSE!

SO, THAT IS WHY YOU TELL US TO ACT AS IF WE IN OUR CUPS ARE, EH? YOU FIGURE THE COUNT IS ADVANTAGE TAKING TO GO OUT AND LOOK IN THE TOWER AGAIN... BUT FOR WHAT HE LOOKING WAS?



FOR A TREASURE IN JEWELS BEYOND BELIEF, YOU FOOLS... AND I'D HAVE HAD IT GIVEN A LITTLE MORE TIME! IT'S THERE I KNOW! I FOUND AN OLD MANUSCRIPT THAT TOLD OF THE ANCIENT KING OF OUR LAND WHO HAD HIDDEN IT THERE!

TOO BAD, COUNT! YOU'D NEVER HAVE FOUND IT NOW! ALL YOU SUCCEEDED IN DOING EACH TIME YOU REACHED IN AMONG THOSE CHIMES WAS TO MAKE THEM GO OFF!



BUT YOU WEREN'T REACHING DEEP ENOUGH! THEY WERE HIDDEN IN A RECESS BEYOND THE CHIMES AND I FOUND THEM WHEN I WENT BACK TO LOOK AROUND AFTER YOU ESCAPED US EARLIER THIS EVENING!

CURSE YOU! WITH THAT I COULD HAVE PERSUADED MARIA TO MARRY ME... PERSUADED HER TO GIVE UP THIS WARD AND GUARDIAN FARCE! SHE WOULD HAVE OVERLOOKED MY YEARS IF SHE COULD HAVE HAD THOSE JEWELS!



SORRY TO SPOIL YOUR ROMANTIC ASPIRATIONS, COUNT, BUT THESE JEWELS GO TO THE MAYOR WHO WILL DECIDE WHERE THEY RIGHTFULLY BELONG... WHILE YOU ANSWER FOR MURDER!

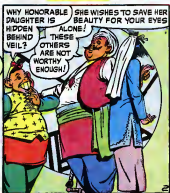
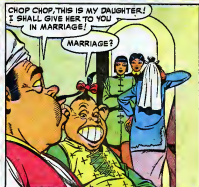
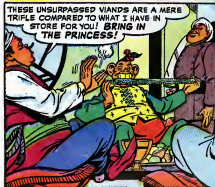
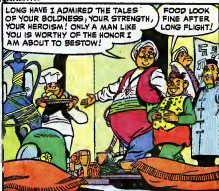
ALORS! IT IS MUCH BETTER THIS WAY! IT WOULD BE SO UNFAIR FOR THIS AGING ONE TO WIN THE HAND OF THE BEAUTIFUL MARIA WHILE I PERSIST IN MY LONELY BACHELORHOOD!

BLACKHAWK

CHOP CHOP

and the VEILED PRINCESS







BLACKHAWK

OH, WOE! NOW IF THAT ONE WERE THE PRINCESS IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT STORY! GOLLY! THE WAY SHE LOOKS AT ME SHE MUST HAVE FALLEN FOR CHOP CHOP VELLY MUCH!

YOU WILL STAY HERE WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER UNTIL YOU DECIDE TO BE MY SON-IN-LAW!

NEVER!
NEVER!

ALAS! BLACKHAWKS WILL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN! IT IMPOSSIBLE TO LOOSEN CORDS AND ME HERE MANY HOURS ALREADY! BUT BETTER SLOW DEATH THAN MARRIAGE TO THE PRINCESS!

SHHH!

I KNEW IT! SHE WAS SMITTEN BY CHOP CHOP!

YOU MUST NOT MAKE A SOUND! I WAS ABLE TO GET IN HERE BECAUSE I TOLD THE GUARDS THE PRINCESS HAD SENT ME TO FIND A BROOCH SHE HAD LOST!

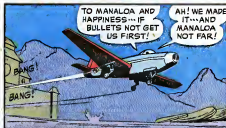
YOU RISK YOUR LIFE TO SAVE ME! VELLY ROMANTIC!

YES! WE WILL FLY TO MANALOA AND HAPPINESS!

MANALOA! OH JOY! VELLY ROMANTIC TROPICAL ISLAND WHERE ONE CAN LIVE OFF NATURE'S BOUNTY AND ENJOY BLESSINGS OF BEAUTIFUL WIFE SUCH AS THIS!

I STOLE THE KEY TO THIS SECRET PANEL! FOLLOW ME!

TO THE ENDS OF EARTH IF NEED BE!



SPIDER MAN

THEY were busy talking around the old dining room table and no one was watching Louie beck by the dusty window. No one saw him catch the fly. He sat there for a long time, his beady eyes glued on the fat blue hottle fly, watching it bumble and hurl itself stupidly at the window pane. After what seemed an hour, the fly had betted itself within reach. Louie made one swift snatch and it was caught. He held his big hand tightly closed so no one would hear the muted, angry droning of his precious captive.

At the table Big Red was whining, "How much longer we gonna stay holed up in this forsaken dive, Max? The heat oughta be off by now."

Pete raised his head and his pale, cold eyes glittered. "Nohody asked you to come here, loud-mouth. If it don't suit you, get out."

"Now, now," Max said placatingly. "Cut it out, you two. It was lucky Pete threw in with us. This old farm of his is just like layin' out in Mexico or maybe South America. No cops ever get within ten miles of the place. It's as safe as a nursery until we get the word to blow out and start spending the dough we got. Let's not get edgy."

Louie was edging quietly toward the dark, covehby corner of the old room. He clutched his fly and watched the men at the table with sly, fearful, empty eyes. He was a little afraid of the loud, hard man they called Big Red. But the cold, merciless Max could reduce him to shivering terror with a look.

The endless bickering argument went on at the table. The gang had been holed up for a week now, with money burning in their pockets and tempers drawn taut from confinement. Louie was careful to keep out of their way when Pete was not around. Pete took care that nobody hurt Louie. Pete was his brother and they were all efraid of Pete, even the deadly Max. But Louie was not afraid of Pete and the thought made him stifle a giggle. Everybody was afraid of Pete but him.

The spider was in his web in the corner, down close to the baseboard, clinging among the dried shells of dead flies and a limp moth. He was a

giant of his kind, gray and hairy and incredibly swift and Louie loved the ugly monster even more than he loved all spiders.

He knelt now, drooling a little in his eagerness, and threw his fly at the heavy web. The big fly hit the web and stuck, struggling, his furious beating of wings rising to a shrill whine. The sound of the whine reached the table.

"What's the goof doing in the corner?" Max demanded sharply, and Louie froze. "What's he up to, Pete?"

"N-nothin'," Louie said quickly. "Just . . . just sitting here."

Max took a step and his voice rose to a snarl. "He's feedin' one of those spiders. He's feedin' it a big fly. I told him to get those spiders outa here. They give me the creeps, I can't stand 'em."

"I like 'em," Louie said. "They're purty and I got 'em all named. This here one's name is—"

Max howled a shrill curse and swung his arm in a savage, impulsive slash. The back of his hand caught Louie's face and knocked him back on his haunches. Louie put his hand to his face and whimpered.

Pete came away from the table with the silent grace of a panther. He faced Max and Big Red, eyes blazing, his terrible right hand clawed close to the front of his jacket. "Don't you ever touch him again," Pete whispered in a harsh, terrible hiss of sound. "Don't you ever lay a hand on my brother again, or so help me . . ."

Big Red had both hands flat on the table and the hands were trembling. Max's face was chalk white and his eyes were full of fear. He wet his lips. "Now Pete," he mumbled. "Now Pete, I didn't hurt the goof. I didn't even figure to touch him. I just sort of over-reached. You know that, Pete."

"Not ever again," Pete said.

"It's those spiders," Max said. "For the love of Moses, make him stop feeding those spiders, Pete. I can't stand 'em. They give me the willies, Pete. I even dream about 'em at night and I wake up and feel 'em walkin' on my face. Make him stop."

Pete looked at the fawning Louie. "Get rid of the spiders. You hear me? Get rid of 'em. We

get too good a thing to hust up over some dirty old spiders. Do it today."

"Sure, Pete," Louie whimpered and he put his hands over his face and cried, rocking his big body. "My purty spiders."

Pete went to town that afternoon, because he had lived on the farm as a kid and nobody thought anything about his coming in for mail and groceries. Nobody knew about Max and Big Red. And all afternoon, while Louie scuttled around, keeping out of their way and getting rid of his spiders, Max and Big Red sat and whispered together. Once Louie heard Big Red laugh and say, "I'm with you, Max. A two-way split beats a three-way split any day. And I'm scared of that monkey. He's too handy with the rod."

It was late afternoon when Pete's old car came chugging into the yard. Max was on the porch and Louie was watching from the back door. Big Red was nowhere in sight. Max called, "Any word from our mouthpiece yet?"

"No word," Pete said. "We must be still hot. But I got news for you."

At that moment Big Red stepped from behind the tool shed, right behind the old touring car, his gun in his hand and his thick lips peeled back in an ugly grin. "I got news for you, too, Petie. Me and Max, we decided to make it a two-way split."

He was laughing when he started to shoot. Louie heard the gun go *Blam! Blam!* Pete was half out of the car when the slugs hit him and whirled him around and folded him over the door like a dish-rag. Big Red was still laughing when Pete gave a convulsive twist and got his own gun out. Big Red died with that laugh frozen on his face, along with the surprise and the fright.

On the porch, Max said, "Well, what do you know? Now it's only a one-way split."

Pete had fallen out of the car now and Louie, running across the yard, was holding his brother's head and crying. Pete opened his eyes and looked past Louie at the grinning Max and his face twisted. "News," he whispered. "Joke's on you, you rat. The Sheriff's on his way out to look around. He thinks you might be hiding out in the woods back here. Let's see you get out of that." His laughter choked in his throat and died.

Max caught Louie's shoulders and jerked him around. Max's eyes were wild, like a trapped animal's. He shook Louie violently. "Did you hear that, Loonie? Did you get it? The Law's

coming out. I gotta hide. You gotta hide me, understand? You know what I'll do to you if you don't?"

"Yes," Louie whimpered, scrambling to his feet. "I'll hide yuh. I got a place. The old root cellar. Nobody even knows about it but me and Pete, and Pete's dead."

He turned and lumbered across the yard with Max panting at his heels. His great strength bent to the corner of broken wagon box, there in the weeds, and when he had slid it aside a little, a black pit gaped up at them. There was a rickety ladder down, and the shadow of rotting shelves.

"Get my flashlight," Max shouted. "Hurry, Goof."

A moment later, flashlight in hand, Max was letting himself down into the old cellar. He paused at the bottom and glared up, his face incredibly evil and menacing, his hand on the gun inside his coat. "Get this, nitwit—you slide that thing back and keep still. Understand? If you give me away, I'll get you if it takes a thousand years. Do you know that?"

"Y-yes," Louie whimpered, "I won't say a word."

He shoved the heavy wagon box back over the hole and, for good measure, he staggered from the barn with hundred-pound sacks of feed to pile into the old, faded wagon box. He was finishing the last trip from the barn when Max screamed. His voice came thinly from the muffling earth.

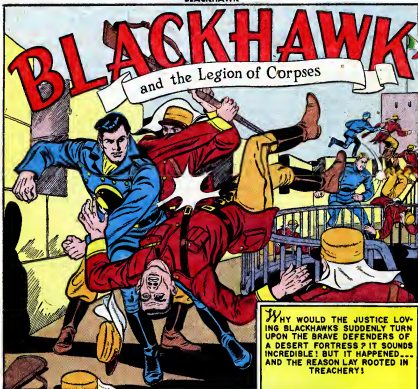
"Spiders!" Max shrieked. "Get me outa here. Open that top. This place is swarming with spiders."

Louie knelt and put his face close to the box. "I know it," he called. "I put 'em there. You said I hadda get rid of my spiders so I put 'em all down in there."

"Open up!" Max howled. "Get me outa here."

"No," Louie said. "You hadn't oughta had him kill my brother. Now Pete ain't here to protect me any more and I'm afraid when you're up here. I ain't gonna let you up so you can hurt me. I'm goin' away, up in the hills, to Grampa's farm, and I ain't ever comin' back."

Louie turned then and went trotting away across the weedy yard. Behind him the screaming stopped. Now there was only a kind of sohhing laughter, like the laughter of a man driven mad by fear. Louie began to run and after a while he could no longer hear even the laughter and he wasn't afraid any more.



IN THE NORTH AFRICAN HEADQUARTERS OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION...

WE RECEIVED PART OF THE RADIO MESSAGE FOR HELP FROM THE FORT AT RIDI-BEL-ABDES... IT WAS A WOMAN'S VOICE...AND THEN IT WAS CUT OFF!

YOU'VE HAD TROUBLE THERE FROM BEDOUIN BANDS, HAVEN'T YOU GENERAL? YOU GENERAL?



TROUBLE THAT IS HOW YOU SAY FORMIDABLE, BLACKHAWK! THE FORT MAY BE UNDER HEAVY SIEGE! HOW A WOMAN HAPPENS TO BE THERE IS A MYSTERY... BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING THERE!



BLACKHAWK

ONCE THAT RADIO MESSAGE WAS CUT OFF, WE COULD NOT CONTACT THE FORT AGAIN! I KNEW THAT YOU BLACKHAWKS WERE IN THIS VICINITY, THAT YOU HAVE FASTER PLANES THAN OURS, THAT YOU ARE OLD FRIENDS OF THE LEGION!

YOU NEED SAY NO MORE, SIR! WE'LL BE GLAD TO HELP!



BONNE CHANCE, MES AMIS! THE FOREIGN LEGION THANKS YOU!



A LITTLE WHILE LATER...

THAT'S THE FORT BELOW! LET'S SCOUT THE SURROUNDING AREA FIRST TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY ATTACKERS!



VOILA, BLACKHAWK! DEAD BEDOUINS!



AND SOME LIVE ONES! LET'S BUZZ THEM FOR A BETTER LOOK!



THAT'S ODD! THEY'RE WAVING... SORT OF FRIENDLY!

PERHAPS ALL DER FIGHT HAS BEEN TAKEN OUDT OF DEM, JA? PERHAPS DEY ARE HOPING VE VILL NOT STRAFE DEM IF DEY MAKE DER FRIENDLY GESTURE!



AND THAT ONE SALUTING... IT'S ODD!



WE'LL LAND IN THE FORT NOW! REMEMBER, MEN, THERE'S EVEN LESS ROOM THAN ON THE DECK OF A CARRIER... SO MAKE IT GOOD!



NICE WORK, LAOS! WE DID IT ON A TIME!

BLACKHAWK! HOW GLAD I AM TO SEE YOU! I AM CAPTAIN KROPP, THE COMMANDANT, AT YOUR SERVICE! OUR SITUATION WAS DESPERATE FOR AWHILE!



YOU SEEM TO HAVE IT PRETTY WELL IN HAND NOW!

THOSE POOR GUYS MUST HAVE BEEN UP THERE FOR HOURS! LET'S GO UP AND GIVE THEM SOME CIGARETTES AND CHOCOLATE!



BY-YIMINY, I'LL BET THEY CAN USE SOME!

YES, BLACKHAWK, THE SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL NOW! WE STARTED TO GET THE UPPER HAND JUST AS THAT RADIO MESSAGE FOR HELP WENT OUT TO HEADQUARTERS!

THE GENERAL THOUGHT IT ODD THAT IT CAME IN A WOMAN'S VOICE!



A WOMAN'S VOICE? WHAT A FANTASTIC ILLUSION! BUT THEN OUR BROADCASTING APPARATUS PLAYS STRANGE TRICKS OUT HERE IN THE DESERT! I ASSURE YOU IT WAS OUR REGULAR WIRELESS MAN!



I SEE!

WHAT ARE YOUR MEN GOING UP THERE, BLACKHAWK? CALL THEM DOWN! COME DOWN, YOU TWO!



THEY PROBABLY JUST WANT TO TALK TO YOUR MEN, CAPTAIN! WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?



BLACKHAWK

BUT I AM SURE YOU WILL NOT BE AS FOOLISH AS YOUR FRIENDS UP THERE! MY MEN WOULD SHOOT YOU DEAD IN A MATTER OF SECONDS!

IT ALL BECOMES CLEAR NOW! THE MEN WE THOUGHT WERE BEDOUINS IN THE DESERT WERE REALLY LEGIONAIRES! THAT WAS THE REASON FOR THE FRIENDLY WAVE AND THE MILITARY SALUTE!



TOO BAD A FEW ESCAPED, BLACKHAWK! YOU WILL NOT, I ASSURE YOU!

WHY DON'T YOU SHOOT US NOW?



BECAUSE FIRST YOU MUST RADIO THE GENERAL AND TELL HIM THAT ALL IS WELL HERE! IT WOULD NOT DO FOR HIM TO BECOME EVEN MORE SUSPICIOUS!



YOU'D BETTER NOT COUNT ON US, CAPTAIN! BY THE WAY, YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY THE ONLY REAL LEGIONAIRE IN THE FORT EVEN THOUGH A TRAITOROUS ONE! HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET THE BEDOUINS IN AND THE REAL LEGIONAIRES OUT INTO THE DESERT IN BEDOUIN CLOTHES?



I HAD A DEVOTED ASSISTANT, BLACKHAWK! COME, YOU WILL MEET HER! PERHAPS SHE WILL TELL YOU NOT THAT IT WILL DO ANY OF YOU A BIT OF GOOD!



WE WILL LET YOU STAY IN THE CELLS FOR A REASONABLE TIME... JUST ENOUGH TO MAKE IT LOOK TO THE GENERAL AS IF YOU WERE BUSY HELPING THE LEGION HOLD THE FORT... THEN YOU WILL TELL HIM ALL IS WELL! HA! HA!



COMPANY FOR YOU, YVETTE, MY LITTLE PIGEON!



THE BLACKHAWKS! SO EVEN THEY HAVE LOST AGAINST YOU!

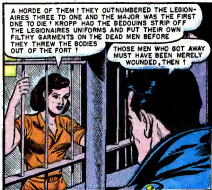


HA! HA! I SEE AT LAST YOU ARE BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE CAPTAIN KROPP'S SUPERIOR QUALITIES!



ON THE CONTRARY, KROPP! I LOATHE YOU FOR THE UNREGENERATE FORMER NAZI S.S. MAN THAT YOU REALLY ARE! AND I HATE MYSELF FOR EVER HAVING BELIEVED THAT YOU HAD CHANGED!







BLACKHAWK



PARDON ME IF I'M TOO GENTLE BUT THE ONLY WAY I CAN SAFELY GET YOU LOOSE IS WITH THE WOODEN PART OF THE GUN BUTT! IT DOESN'T CONDUCT ELECTRICITY!



NOW, LET MY MEN OUT... AND YVETTE!
BLACKHAWK, YOU GET JUMP ON THEM! GOODIE!



OH, IT'S TOO WONDERFUL TO BELIEVE THAT THIS MONSTER WON'T WIN OUT AFTER ALL!

AKRA BISHDAGAI! I KNOW DOSE ARABIC WORDS! HE IS FOR HELP YELLING! BUT I SOON SHUT HIM UP!



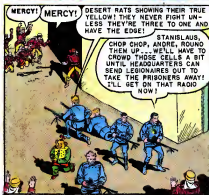
HE'S YOURS, YVETTE! DON'T SHOOT HIM! LEAVE THAT TO THE FIRING SQUAD! OUTSIDE, BOYS, AND MAN THE MACHINE GUNS IN THE DRILL YARD! THE REST OF THE BECOUINS WILL BE OUT IN A MINUTE!

NO, KROPP! THE FIRING SQUAD WILL DO IT BETTER AS BLACKHAWK SAYS!

YVETTE, YOU WOULDN'T SHOOT ME... NO... NO!



WE MADE IT IN THE NICK OF TIME! THEY NEVER LOOKED FOR ANY TROUBLE TO ARISE FROM THIS SIDE OF THE PARAPET!



MERCY! MERCY! DESERT RATS SHOWING THEIR TRUE YELLOW! THEY NEVER FIGHT UNLESS THEY'RE THREE TO ONE AND HAVE THE EDGE!

STANISLAUS, CHOP CHOP, ANDRE, ROUND THEM UP... WE'LL HAVE TO CROWD THOSE CELLS A BIT UNTIL HEADQUARTERS CAN SEND LEGIONAIRES OUT TO TAKE THE PRISONERS AWAY! I'LL GET ON THAT RADIO NOW!



NEXT DAY...

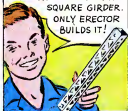
...ALSO, WE FOUND THE WOUNDED LEGIONAIRES IN THE DESERT AS WE WERE COMING IN! FOR YOUR GALLANT SERVICE TO THE LEGION, THEREFORE, I BESTOW ON YOU BLACKHAWKS THESE MEDALS OF HONOR!

OVER THE VASTNESS OF THE DESERT SANDS, OVER THE SEAS AND THE MANY LANDS WE RALLY TO THE FEEBLE CRY OF THOSE ON WHOM TYRANNY'S DARKNESS IS ABOUT TO CLOSE! WE'RE BLACKHAWKS!

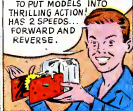


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